

Midwest Folklore

SPRING, 1960

Published by
Indiana University
Bloomington, Indiana

Vol. X, No. 1

Midwest Folklóre

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Journal of the

Proceedings of the
General Assembly of the
Presbyterian Church of the United States
and of America
Held at the City of New York
in the Year 1852
Volume 1
Published by the Board of Christian Education
of the Presbyterian Church of the United States
and of America
New York: 1853

BY WILLIAM R. LINNEMAN
University of Illinois
Champaign, Illinois

OPIE READ AND THE ARKANSAW TRAVELER: THE TRIALS OF A REGIONAL HUMOR MAGAZINE

WHEN OPIE READ, whose rangy build, honest face, and unkempt hair sometimes gave people the impression that he was part farmer and part raftsmen, came out of his native South to work as a reporter for the *Cleveland Leader*, he tried his hand at writing some sketches in Negro dialect. The editor told him to "Cut 'em out. Those Negro sketches may be all right down among the rebels, but not here. Some of our colored citizens have sent in protests against them."¹ Read cut out altogether and went back to Little Rock. It was not to be the first time that his fidelity in reproducing natural speech and character influenced a move on his part.

Back in Little Rock, Read worked for a while on *The Gazette*, but he was still dissatisfied because he wanted more opportunity for creative work. In 1882 he founded *The Arkansaw Traveler* with his brother-in-law, P. D. Benham. *The Traveler* was similar to *The Detroit Free Press*, *Texas Siftings*, and *The Burlington Hawkeye*,

other regional humorous newspapers. Papers of this class consisted of eight folio size pages; they carried few illustrations or cartoons; they were usually one or two man operations. In the instance of *The Traveler*, Benham was the business manager, and Read was the clipper, editor, and chief contributor, writing about ten full-length columns a week.

Several Arkansas newspapers have flown the banner *Traveler* from their mastheads, and Read, early in his career, had worked on one of them, published at Conway. The student newspaper at the University of Arkansas is called *The Traveler* today. The name comes, of course, from the tune and famous dialogue sketch. In this dialogue the traveler stops at a squatter's cabin and asks the resident several questions. All of the squatter's answers are surly and laconic, and he has no urgent desire to provide the traveler with food, lodging, information, or anything else he might ask for. While the dialogue is carried on, the squatter hops about, fiddling the first few bars of a tune on a violin. Finally the traveler asks him why he doesn't finish the tune. When the squatter admits that he can't, the traveler takes the instrument and completes the tune. The squatter is so overjoyed that he opens his doors wide, brings out his best victuals and whiskey, and invites the traveler to stay as long as he pleases.

Read claimed that the original Arkansas Traveler was a Colonel Sandy Faulkner and the incidents that gave birth to the sketch occurred in the campaign of 1840. Faulkner and a group of politicians were touring the state.

One day in the Boston Mountain, the party approached a squatter's for information of the route, and Col. "Sandy" was made spokesman of the company, and it was upon his witty responses the tune and story were founded. . . . Afterward it grew into popularity. When he subsequently went to New Orleans, the fame of the "Arkansaw Traveler" had gone ahead of him, and at a banquet, amid clinking glasses and brilliant toasts, he was handed a violin by the then governor of Louisiana and requested to favor them with the favorite Arkansaw tune.²

At the top of page one of every issue, *The Traveler* printed a musical stave with the notes of the first several bars of the tune against a background picture of the traveler, the squatter, his cabin and family. The newspaper also printed the sketch in the first issue, and this dialogue was to set the pattern for the skits that were to make *The Traveler* famous. In all of these the traveler, usually a person of refinement and education, stopped at a squatter's cabin and asked for help of some kind. He was always met with the same type of curt, sullen answers. The squatter invariably lived in a leaky

shack, had several hounds and more children, a still that he wished to keep hidden, and a wife about as hospitable as himself. The traveler made no headway at all against this bluff of taciturnity until he either produced some whiskey or else exhibited some talent that won the squatter's admiration.

The Arkansaw Traveler soon became well known throughout the country. The New York humor magazines, such as *Puck* and *Life*, clipped from its pages, and in San Francisco Ambrose Bierce relied on it to swell out the issues of *The Wasp*. At home its success was remarkable. F. W. Allsopp, who was just beginning his long career in Little Rock journalism at that time, called it "an oasis in the desert."³ Within six months the newspaper claimed a circulation larger than any paper in the state.

Coming into the world almost unannounced and with no especial mission except to do good and provide food and raiment for its proprietors, it has attained a popularity as unexpected as it is satisfactory. Today, no paper in America is more widely copied, no paper of its size contains more or better original matter and its selections are the best that careful reading and a pair of scissors can collect from the most popular exchanges.⁴

The scissors and careful reading were very important for the success of *The Traveler* because about two-thirds of every issue was reprinted from other newspapers and magazines. Most of Read's writing appeared on the first page. Besides the traveler sketches, there were anecdotes and short short stories in Negro dialect, a column called "Plantation Proverbs," also in Negro dialect, and a lead column of paragraphs called "Limnings." Page three usually carried an original poem and short story, which were seldom humorous in mood, but, conversely, sentimental and melancholy. On page four Read had a column or two of editorials. Sometimes he deigned to comment on Arkansas politics. "It is very difficult for people who live outside of this state to understand Arkansaw politics. However, no national calamity is likely to result from such ignorance."⁵

The publishers had printed 10,000 copies for the first issue, and the circulation figure grew from there. Read was later to claim in his biography, *I Remember*, that within three years the circulation had jumped to 85,000. There seems some difference of opinion about this figure however, because Rowell's *American Newspaper Directory* for the year 1885 credits *The Traveler* with only 25,000. Either Read's memory wasn't too good, or else, as has so often been pointed out, exaggeration is a fundamental trait of American humor.

But *The Traveler* did not win unlimited popularity, mostly because it was unable to satisfy all the people, all the time. In its

early years it was frequently attacked by the clergy, both for its "coarseness" and because it appeared on Sunday. Then there were those who complained that the paper was too refined. "A dissatisfied reader of this paper, and there are doubtless many of them, writes as follows: 'I like *The Traveler* very well but I find one fault with it. You clip above the majority of your readers. I like to see clean articles but I don't want them to be so refined and high toned that I can't understand them. Give us something of the rip-roaring order and I can get you fifty subscribers in my neighborhood.'"⁶

But as the issues and volumes multiplied and Read's sketches of the backwoods squatter achieved a national reputation, another type of criticism, more serious than the above, began to develop, especially in the hill and piney districts of the state.

In the capital city and in the larger towns of the state *The Arkansas Traveler* was looked upon with toleration if not favor, but after a time, in the rural districts, it was held in execration. The up-creek politician quickly wise to this soon made of our sheet a target for his shafts not of wit but of scurrility. It was said that one old fellow had been elected to the legislature for the virtue of having declared in a forensic tirade that he would like to tie a rope about my neck and lead a mule from under me. . . .

It was of no use to print sketches descriptive of the beauty of the upper regions of the state, rivers nowhere equalled for bending graces, hills that seemed the breeding heights of gods and goddesses: it was of no effect to affirm that some of the noblest men and women of America were born and reared in this a favored land. "No, sah," would say the fellow whose granddad had worn a coon-skin cap, "the aim of that thing is to make fun of me an' my folks, an' you jest wait till I git a aim at him."⁷

Frank Luther Mott attributes the move of *The Traveler* to Chicago to Read's fear of reprisals such as the one threatened above.⁸ This might have been a factor, but there were certainly other reasons for the move. Read himself mentions that the magazine's patronage was scattered throughout the country and owed no specific allegiance to Arkansas. Moreover, he claims they had outgrown the facilities of the local post office.⁹ Then, he and Benham were encouraged in their action by the example of *Texas Siftings*, which had left its home in Austin, moved to New York, changed its format to that of an illustrated humor magazine, and had quickly become the circulation leader among that group. Finally, Read had always been ambitious and on the outlook for opportunities to expand his talent. He had begun to write novels and had the feeling, common enough at the time, that Chicago would become a great literary center.

Whatever the reasons involved, they set up headquarters on the seventh floor of the Calumet Building, and the issue of May 14, 1887,

carried the first Chicago imprint. The newspaper soon began to reflect the move. Many of the anecdotes and sketches were set in Chicago restaurants and hotels and on cable cars. There was also occasional comment on Chicago politics, especially the boodling aldermen. These were sometimes accompanied by crude black and white cartoons, the first illustrations *The Traveler* had ever carried.

But fundamentally the newspaper stayed the same. Read still continued his backwoods sketches and Negro dialect stories. He also kept one eye on Arkansas. Perhaps he felt a little guilty about the move because he began to make more and more laudatory comments on the state and ran frequent advertising blurbs about its great potential. "*The Arkansaw Traveler*, since the removal of its chief office to Chicago, has discovered that knowledge of the advantages of Arkansaw is scanty, even in this great city. . . . Hereafter we shall devote a column or more a week of *The Traveler's* space to the material interest of the state of Arkansaw, and besides this we have in course of preparation a special edition of exceeding one hundred thousand copies [sic] devoted entirely to information concerning the state."¹⁰

The people of Arkansas also kept one eye, jaundiced, on *The Traveler*. If they were angry with Read before, they were doubly incensed now, and for all his praises of their state, they were not pacified. The attack was led by the clergy, the politicians, and the country editors, whom Read had devastatingly ridiculed.

Sometime ago a number of country editors in Arkansaw, denounced in silly phrases the paper that is doing more for the state than any other publication. With becoming modesty we refer to *The Arkansaw Traveler*. These editors, with one eye on rural prejudices and the other eye on the state house, declared that the sketches printed in *The Traveler* bring the state into contempt; that it is treason to give, in dialect, the sayings of uneducated people. It is well to publish murders, it is journalistic enterprise to give below frightening head-lines an account of a man shot dead in the road; and it is right to hang the murderer to the limb of a tree, but for heaven's sake do not give any of his dialect, for that would injure the state. You may print his dying statement, but instead of saying (as the murderer would doubtless express it), "I tuck up ther notion that Simmons had been foolin' with me 'bout long ernuff," you must employ these polite words: "The idea occurred to me that the Hon. Mr. Simmons had practiced upon me his impositions during a sufficient time."¹¹

Then there was the politician who wrote *The Traveler*, "Cowards, afraid longer to remain in the state, you have taken refuge among the Yankees to make fun of us."¹²

Read reported that there was a decline in advertising revenue after the move, but it is to be hoped that the partners were not in the straits that the following story indicates. Read and Benham were walking down State Street when they passed the office of a hair restorative firm. Benham mentioned that they ought to try to get an ad from the business, and Read, glancing in the window and seeing several customers, said there was no time better than the present. Read had a very fine head of thick, black hair. He walked in the store, grabbed the manager's hand and thanked him warmly, stating openly that a few months previous he had been completely bald and after using four dozen bottles of the hair restorer, grew his leonine mane. The manager took several orders from the customers present and gave Benham a big ad for the paper when he found out who Read was.¹³

In the fall of 1888 the paper absorbed *The Illustrated Graphic News* and changed the format considerably. There were now illustrations of Chicago monuments and other local phenomena. There were copies of old masters and sentimental pictures of sad young ladies, little children, kittens and sheep. All of the drawings were black and white and usually ornate. Read had advertised with great flair that the new magazine would contain sixteen pages, but the size was not measurably increased because the page was cut in half from folio to quarto. *The Traveler* had moved into the class of the illustrated humor magazines.

Read left *The Traveler* in 1893 to devote his time entirely to fiction. With his departure the paper became less literary and more a comic journal. More cartoons were used, more jokes, and the sketches shrank in length. The circulation shrank too, only 12,000 by 1900. By 1913 *The Traveler* had become a monthly, and in 1916 it ceased publication altogether.

NOTES

¹ Opie Read, *I Remember* (New York, 1930), p. 176.

² *The Arkansaw Traveler*, I (June 4, 1882), 1.

³ F. W. Allsopp, *History of the Arkansas Press* (Little Rock, 1922), p. 375.

⁴ *The Arkansaw Traveler*, I (November 19, 1882), 8.

⁵ *The Arkansaw Traveler*, I (June 4, 1882), 4.

⁶ *The Arkansaw Traveler*, VII (October 24, 1885), 1.

⁷ *I Remember*, p. 186.

⁸ Frank Luther Mott, *History of American Magazines*, III (Cambridge, 1938), p. 270.

⁹ *I Remember*, p. 188.

¹⁰ *The Arkansaw Traveler*, XII (January 28, 1888), 4.

¹¹ *The Arkansaw Traveler*, XIII (September 29, 1888), 1.

¹² *I Remember*, p. 194.

¹³ *Texas Siftings*, XI (September 21, 1889), 14.

(Reprint from *Washington Post*.)

BY BRIAN SUTTON-SMITH
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"SHUT UP AND KEEP DIGGING": THE CRUEL JOKE SERIES

ALTHOUGH ANY PARTICULAR joke series may be ephemeral, the phenomenon of the joke series itself is not. In the twentieth century, ease of communication and large-scale human aggregations have led to an increase in this particular type of oral culture. Almost overnight a new type of joke, invented most probably in an urban entertainment center, has spread rapidly throughout the country. As it has ramified, variants have been added and the joke has shifted down the age levels in the classic manner but with accelerated speed. Examples have sometimes persisted for many years as is the case with the moron riddles still preserved by children.¹

Most of these joke series are probably recurrent expressions of underlying and persistent motifs. For example, this paper describes

the collection of 155 Cruel Jokes between September and December of 1958. There is no set name for these jokes and they are variously termed: Cruel Jokes, Bloody Marys, Hate Jokes, Ivy League Jokes, Sadist Jokes, Gruesomes, Grimsels, Sick Jokes, Freddie Jokes, Depression Jokes, Meanie Jokes and the Comedy of Horror. All of these jokes have in common a disregard for sentiments which are usually taken very seriously. The afflictions of others which are normally treated with considerable sensitivity or tenderness, the love for children which is regarded as "human nature," the respect for religious institutions and revered persons which is customarily thought to be basic, are in these jokes made the subject matter of amusement. But offensive and "modern" as these jokes may at first appear, they are not without precedent. The naivety of the questioner: "Please Mummy, why does Daddy look so pale?" and the cynicism of the adult figure: "Shut up kid and keep digging," re-echo the counterpointing of naivety and cynicism to be found in the Little Audrey Jokes of two decades ago.² The macabre quality throughout is reminiscent of the even earlier Little Willie joke series.³ The value of the systematic documentation of this series and of future series, is that it should make possible the drawing of more definite conclusions concerning the nature and persistence of these motifs. The present series seems to differ from the Little Audrey series in the following ways: (A) There is a more consistent satire on "mother love." The indifference of the mother for her child is the major single theme in the collection. (B) The macabre details are more extensive. Little Audrey is cooked, crushed and broken mainly by accident. The present children are drowned, mutilated and crippled by intent. (C) In 1925 Myerson stated that we are aroused to mirth by the real or supposed manifestations of mental illness, but that bodily illness tends to arouse our sympathy or some other emotion more serious than ridicule.⁴ The present jokes suggest that this generalization no longer holds. The "cripple" has taken his place alongside the "moron" and the "looney" as a fitting subject for humor.

These jokes appear to have originated during this decade and their origin is attributed to both American⁵ and British⁶ sources.

The samples from which the present jokes are derived were constituted as follows:⁷ (A) One hundred and twenty sophomore college students (forty-five men, and seventy-five women), at Bowling Green State University, most of whom are residents of Ohio, contributed a total of sixty-four jokes. Only sixteen students did not know any jokes (twelve men, and four women). The average contribution of the men was 2.4 jokes and of the women, 3.4 jokes. Most

of the jokes had been learned at college. Less than 20% of the examples were mentioned as having been heard at high school. (B) One hundred students (fifty-nine boys, and forty-one girls), in grades nine through twelve from New London, Ohio, contributed forty-two jokes. Eighteen children did not know any jokes (ten boys, and eight girls). The boys contributed an average of one joke and the girls an average of .9 jokes. (C) Two hundred and forty children from Grand Rapids, Ohio in grades five through twelve contributed fifty-one jokes. In grades five through eight less than half the class contributed jokes; the average was again practically one joke per child. (D) Sixty-seven children from the fifth and sixth grades at Osborne School, Sandusky contributed four jokes only. Eight children made contributions and they were all girls. In all cases the subjects were presented with a questionnaire giving two examples of cruel jokes (number eighty and ninety-eight), and asking them to write down any further examples that they knew. The numbers of the jokes which were most popular in these various samples are to be found in footnote eight.

In the following collection the jokes are grouped into a number of categories to facilitate analysis, but they are numbered sequentially throughout.

CATEGORY 1: THE MURDER OF FRIENDS AND RELATIVES

1. *"Mommy, why are we out in our boat at night?"*
"Shut up, and tie that cement block around your leg."
2. *"But Mommy, I don't want to go swimming."*
"Shut up brat, and get back in the bag."
3. *Down by the river a little boy asks his mother:*
"But why am I in this sack?"
4. *"Mommy I'm cold."*
"Get back in the refrigerator right now."
5. *Truck driver: "I got a flat tire today."*
Friend: "How did you do that?"
Truck driver: "I ran over a milk bottle the kid had under his coat."
6. *"I'm cold."*
"How about burning John for fuel."
7. *"Johnny stop twisting your sister's head."*
"Johnny stop twisting your sister's head."
"For the last time, stop twisting your sister's head."
"All right, Johnny, give it back to her."

8. "Johnny quit pulling your sister's ear."
"Johnny quit pulling your sister's ear."
"All right Johnny, give me the ear."
9. "Mommy, grandma is starting to breathe again."
"Shut up, and get that pillow back in place."
10. "Daddy, why is mother running across the field?"
"Shut up and reload the shot gun."
11. "Mommy, mommy, little brother is on fire."
"Then hurry and get a marshmallow."
12. A mother was rowing a boat out in the lake. Her son said:
"Mommy mommy, I'm swallowing water."
"Shut up, and keep swimming."
13. "So where is your sister?"
"Out in the barn hanging herself."
"Then go cut her down."
"Not until she is done."
14. "When are we going to cut down Ma?"
"She isn't dead yet."
15. "Hey mom, why does dad always lose his head?"
"Shut up, and sharpen the axe."
16. "Mommy, what are you going to do with that gun?"
"Shut up, and get up against the wall."
17. "Mommy why are you pointing that gun at me?"
"Junior, hold still."
18. "Mom, I tied Johnny to a railroad track."
"Well untie him."
"No, I like to see people with their head and body separated."
19. "Mommy, where's Daddy?"
"Shut up, and keep digging."
20. "Daddy why is mother lying so still?"
"Shut up, and keep digging."
21. "Mommy is Daddy still sleeping?"
"Shut up, and keep digging."
22. "Mommy why is Daddy in that hole?"
"Shut up, and keep digging."
23. Two kids have just pushed their mother off the cliff.
1st; "Let's go down and look at her mangled body."
2nd; "Don't make me laugh, I've got chapped lips."
24. "Mommy, I just pushed Daddy off the cliff."
"Shut up, I'll crack my lips if I laugh."
25. "But Warden, I like Joe."
"Shut up and pull the switch."

26. "Mama, why are we pushing the car off the cliff?"
"Shut up, or you'll wake up your father."
27. "Ma I want out of the closet."
"Shut up, we don't want the fire to spread to the rest of the house."
28. "Please don't kill Mommy and Daddy tonight Junior.
Its our 12th wedding anniversary."

CATEGORY 2: MUTILATION

29. "Mommy, I can't move my foot."
"Shut up, or I'll cut your legs off too."
30. "Mommy, why do I keep walking in circles?"
"Shut up, or I'll nail your other foot to the floor."

CATEGORY 3: CANNIBALISM

31. "Mommy, I want a new dog."
"Shut up, we haven't finished eating this one yet."
32. "Mommy, can we have grandma for dinner?"
"Shut up. We still have half of Aunt Mary in the ice box."
33. "Oh Ma, I hate grandpa's guts."
"Shut up and eat what's put in front of you."
34. "But Ma, I don't like my sister."
"Shut up and eat."
35. "Mom, what are we having for supper?"
"Shut up, and get back into the stove."
36. "Mommy, what is a cannibal?"
"Shut up and eat your brother."
37. "But Mother, I don't want hamburger for supper."
"Shut up and stick your arm back in the meat grinder."
38. "But Mommy, why is Daddy so pale?"
"Shut up and eat your chili."

CATEGORY 4: CORPSES

39. "Son, will you quit kicking your sister."
"Oh, that's all right. She's already dead."
40. "Mama, let me pinch Susie."
"No."
"Please let me pinch Susie."
"All right pinch Susie, then we'll close the casket."
41. "Johnny if you don't stop playing with your little sister I'll have to close the casket."

42. *"Mommy, why can't I kiss grandma?"*
"Shut up, and close the casket."
43. *"Mommy, can we play with Grandpa?"*
"No, you've dug him up enough already."
44. *"Can I play with Grandma?"*
"If you dig her up once more. . !"
45. *"Mommy, can I play in the sandbox?"*
"No. You know your sister is buried there."
46. *And old man and woman were sitting on their porch. Across the road was a graveyard. The old woman said: "I almost cry everytime I think about our beautiful daughter lying in the graveyard." The man said: "Me too. Sometimes I almost wish she were dead."*
47. *A man said to his wife: "This bell is used only for emergencies. Now, I'm going out in the field and if anything like an Indian attack happens, ring the bell." So finally he went out in the field and a couple of minutes later the bell started ringing. So he hurried to the house screaming, "What is the matter?" She said, "I thought I saw an Indian." He said, "Now this is only for very important things." So he went back out in the field. The bell started ringing again. He went back to the house. She said, "I made some cookies and thought you'd like some." Again he explained, "Don't ring the bell unless something really happens." So back to the field went. A couple of minutes later the bell started ringing again. He hurried back to the house and saw that it was on fire and his wife lay dead with an arrow in her back. He said, "Now this is more like it."*

CATEGORY 5: BEASTS

48. *"Mama, what is a werewolf?"*
"Shut up and comb your face."
49. *"Mommy, what is a vampire?"*
"Shut up and drink your blood."
50. *"Mother, this doesn't taste like tomato juice."*
"Shut up and drink it before it clots."
51. *"Daddy what is a vampire?"*
"Shut up and drink your blood."
"But Daddy, I don't like blood. Aw Daddy, have a heart."
"Hmm. Think I will."
52. *"Mother, why do I have warts on me?"*
"Because you are a toad honey."

CATEGORY 6: EXCREMENT

53. "Dad, its dark down here."
"Shut up, or I'll flush it again."
54. "But daddy, I'm not thirsty."
"Shut up, and keep drinking. We've got to empty that toilet in in a hurry."
55. "Mommy I don't want to wash my hair."
"Shut up and flush it again."
56. "Mommy can I lick the bowl."
"Shut up and flush it like anybody else."
57. "Mommy, Mommy, Daddy is throwing up all over the bathroom."
"Why are you crying son?"
"Because sister is getting all the big pieces."
58. His face was flushed, but his broad shoulders saved him.
59. "Can Bill come out?"
"No he's going to the bathroom."
"Can we come in and watch?"
60. "Larry, what are you doing?"
"Shut up, I'm going to the bathroom."

CATEGORY 7: INDIFFERENCE TO THE YOUNG

61. "But mother I don't want to go to Europe."
"Shut up, and get into the Care package."
62. "But mother I don't want to go to China."
"Shut up, and keep digging."
63. "Daddy can't we have a dog?"
"Shut up, and keep barking."
64. "Mommy, why can't we get a garbage disposal?"
"Shut up, and start chewing."
65. "But Mommy I don't want to go to Europe."
"Shut up and keep swimming."
66. "Ma, I don't want to play my horn."
"Shut up, and keep blowing."
67. "Mother, can I put lipstick on?"
"No, you look bad enough already."
68. A little boy named Johnny had been blind since birth. One day, at bedtime, his mother told him she had a wonderful surprise for him tomorrow. If he followed her suggestions he would be able to see for the first time in his life. She told him to pray very hard for sight. The next morning she asked him if he prayed and he said he did. She said, "Johnny when you open your eyes

you'll be able to see because your prayers have been answered." Johnny opened his eyes but could not see. He cried: "Mother, Mother, I can't see, I can't see." She said: "I know dear, April Fool."

CATEGORY 8: DEGENERATE PARENTS

69. "Mommy can I go out and play?"
"Shut up and deal."
70. "Mommy I want milk."
"Shut up and drink your beer."
71. "Daddy, why is it wrong to gamble."
"Shut up, and deal the cards."
72. "Mommy what's a card sharp?"
"Shut up, and deal."
73. "Mommy, can I go to bed?"
"Shut up, and deal."

CATEGORY 9: AFFLICTIONS, DISEASE AND MUTILATION

74. "Mommy, can I play baseball?"
"Get back in bed. You know you can't run without legs."
75. "Can we play baseball with Billy?"
"No. You know he has no arms or legs."
"We know. But we want to use him for 3rd base."
76. Fatboy: "Can I play baseball with you?"
"No. But you can be backstop."
77. Mon. "Mrs Smith, can Billy come out to play?"
"No. He's sick."
Tues. "Mrs. Smith can Billy come out to roller-skate."
"No. He's in the hospital."
Wed. "Mrs. Smith, can Billy come out and roller-skate."
"No he's dead."
Well then, can I borrow his roller-skates?"
78. "Can Johnny play with us?"
"Johnny died two weeks ago."
"Can we come in and play with his toys?"
79. "Can Susan come out and play?"
"No, she is paralyzed."
"Can we come in and watch her grow stiff?"
80. "Can Bill come out and play?"
"No, he's got leprosy."
"Well then can we come in and watch him rot?"

81. "Mother can I go roller-skating?"
"No Johnny you can't."
"Why not Mommy?"
"Because you don't have any feet."
82. "Mother can I go ice skating?"
"No. The skates won't fit your crutches."
83. "Mother, can I wear mittens?"
"Don't be foolish. Its useless if you don't have hands."
84. "Mrs. Jones, your little boy is spoiled."
"How dare you. He is not. How dare you."
"You should see what the steam roller just did to him."
85. Mrs. Jones, Nancy was just run over by a steam-roller."
"Just slide her under the door. I'm taking a bath."
86. A little girl in the store with her mother wants to go up the elevator. "No you can't. You know your iron lung won't fit."
87. "Mommy, can I go play with the other girls?"
"Shut up, or I'll take off your iron lung."
88. "Mommy, can I go swimming with the kids?"
"No, Johnny, you know your iron lung will rust."
89. "Can I go for a ride in the car?"
"No. You know your iron lung won't fit in the car."
90. "Can Johnny come out to play?"
"You know his iron lung won't fit through the door."
91. "Daddy, why are we celebrating Christmas in July?"
"Well, you know you are dying of leukemia."
92. "Daddy why are we decorating the Christmas tree in May."
"You are dying of leukemia."
93. "Mommy, can I have a new dress for Easter?"
"Shut up kid, you know you're going to die before then."
94. "Mommy didn't I get anything for Christmas."
"Shut up, you know you've only got three weeks to live."
95. "Did you hear about the deaf mute who fell down the well and broke two fingers calling for help."
96. "Can Butch come out and play?"
"No, his tongue is tied."
"Well, can we come in and watch him stutter?"
97. "Mommy, who turned out the light?"
"Shut up, you know you're blind."
98. "Mother, can I play the piano?"
"No, your hooks will spoil the ivories."

99. "Mrs. Jones can Bill go swimming?"
"No. You know he's got polio."
"That's all right. We want to float on his iron lung."
100. "Mother, can I play in the snow?"
"You know your braces will rust."
101. Mommy, why can't I help with the dishes?"
"Dear, you know your hooks will rust."
102. "What has 1000 legs and can't walk?"
"500 crippled children."
103. "One good thing about polio. It keeps the kids off the streets."
104. "Here's your cigar back. I heard your baby died."

CATEGORY 10: RELIGION

105. Have you heard the new record? "Stomping in the Stable," by J.C.
106. "Happy Easter Jesus."
107. The latest rock'n roll record is "Stomping at the Crucifix," by Pontius Pilate and the Nasty Nail Drivers.
108. "Happy Easter," from Pontius Pilate and his nine nasty nail drivers.
109. "I don't care who you are. Get that cross off my hill."
110. "Go home Mary. I'll be here for quite a while."
111. I'm going to take you out of the parade, if you don't stop dragging your cross."
112. "Why didn't you have a shave this morning Len?"
"I'm posing for a holy picture."
113. "Mom I don't want to go to church."
"Shut up and keep praying."
114. "I don't care what star you are following. Get your darn camel off my lawn."
115. "I don't care who you are. Don't walk on the water while I'm fishing."
116. "It was the night before Xmas and Mary fell off the donkey."
117. "I don't care what supper this is, there will be no drinks served at this table."
118. "I don't care if this is the last supper. You can't serve wine without a liquor license."
119. "I don't care if this is the last supper. Its \$2.50 a plate."
120. "I don't care who the kid is. Get him out of my manger."

121. *Three wisemen entered the manger where the new born baby lay. The first and second wisemen presented their gifts and made compliments on how the baby looked. The third gave his gift and as he looked at the baby he exclaimed: "Jesus Christ!" Mary said:*
"Now, that is a good name for the baby."

CATEGORY 11: FAMOUS PEOPLE

122. *"Don't worry Mrs. Arnold, Benedict is probably hanging around the East somewhere."*
 123. *"Happy Father's Day, Mr. Lindberg."*
 124. *"Mrs. Dean, has Jimmy got his car fixed yet?"*
 125. *"Happy Mother's Day Mrs. Grimes."*
 126. *"Did your husband get his polio shots yet Mrs. Roosevelt?"*
 127. *"Does your husband like his new plane Liz?"*
 128. *"Other than that Mrs. Lincoln, how did you like the play?"*
 129. *"How did your husband like the theatre, Mrs. Lincoln?"*
 130. *"Mrs. Custer, would you like to contribute to Indian relief?"*
 131. *"Hi, Anastasia, how's the family?"*
 132. *"Helen Keller says—'Uh! Uh! Uh!'"*
 133. *"I don't care what you are President of, that's my golf ball."*
 134. *"I don't care what you are President of, get those golf clubs off my lawn."*

CATEGORY 12: MISCELLANEOUS

135. *"I don't care who you are. Get those reindeer off my roof."*
 136. *"I don't care who you are fat man. Get your reindeer out of my yard."*
 137. *"It was the night before Xmas and Santa Claus died."*
 138. *"Ho. Ho. Ho." (Coughing)—That's Santa Claus in an iron lung.*
 139. *"Little Jack Horner sat in a corner beating his brother."*
 140. *"Humpty Dumpty sat on the wall.
 Humpty Dumpty had a great fall.
 All the King's horses and all the King's men, Ate egg."*
 141. *"I don't care if your name is Napoleon. Get your hand out of my blouse."*
 142. *"I don't care if your name is Santa Claus. Get your hand out of my stocking."*

143. "George George those diamonds are lovely."
"Shut up and keep running. The cops are gaining on us."
144. "Emily I told you the plane didn't have a powder room."
"Shut up and pull the rip cord."
145. "Hey man, remove that grease from your face."
"Sorry I'm a Negro."
146. Tonto: "Me no like your horse Silver."
Lone Ranger: "Keep quiet and eat."
147. "There is a bus leaving in ten minutes. Be under it."
148. "Tommy eat your jello," said the five-year old's mother.
"What for? It isn't dead yet," replied the boy as he watched the quivering jelly.
149. "Hey fellas, when are we going to stop and get some gas?"
"Shut up and keep pushing."
150. "You're about as funny as a mouthful of cancer."
151. "Mommy, what is an Oedipus complex?"
"Shut up kid. Come here and kiss mother."
152. "You're about as funny as a carload of dead babies."
153. "Mother may I have a new dress for Easter?"
"Certainly not George."
154. "Mother can I have that gun?"
"Shut up, the police are already ten less men."
155. "Mother I'm going to—State University."
"Shut up kid, you're better off in Russia."

NOTES

¹ From current research into children's humor.

² B.A. Botkin, *The American People* (London, 1946), pp. 165-168.

³ "Manners and Morals," *Time* (Oct. 21, 1957), p. 27.

⁴ J. C. Flugel, "Humor and Laughter," in Gardner Lindzey, ed., *Handbook of Social Psychology*, II (Cambridge, Mass. 1954), 731-732.

⁵ Gerald Walker, "The Way Those Joke Cycles Start," *The New York Times Magazine* (Oct. 26, 1958), pp. 32-39.

⁶ Associated Press Release, London, Dec. 8th, 1958, quoted in *The Toledo Blade*.

⁷ I am indebted to the following persons for help in collecting these materials: Alexander Baluch, T. C. Gallagher, L. Stutter and W. Ward.

⁸ The only jokes which were highly popular in all samples (that is, samples A, B and C) were numbers 65, 43 and 69. Only jokes which were mentioned by five or more persons are listed below. In the college sample the preferred jokes in rank order of frequency of mention were numbers: 75, 80, 98, 88, 43, 65, 69, 19, 50, 10, 34, 70, 85, 102. New London: 65, 53, 136, 21, 49, 30, 75, 43, 69. Grand Rapids: 10, 65, 21, 80, 44, 69, 70, 43, 53.

BY GEORGE MONTEIRO
Brown University
Providence, Rhode Island

ONE VERY STRONG MAN

IN HIS COLLECTION of folklore from the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, *Bloodstoppers & Bearwalkers*,¹ Richard M. Dorson includes a number of anecdotes which center around Maxine Duham of Three Rivers, Canada. In the Appendix the author observes that although the "feats of other Canadian strong men are retold in books. . . Max Duham seems not to have entered print."² Although I have found nothing which duplicates exactly the material reproduced by Professor Dorson, I have come across references to Duham in two works which deal with nineteenth century Canadian strong men: André N. Montpetit's *Nos Hommes Forts*³ and Benjamin Sulte's *Histoire de Montferrand: L'Athlete Canadien*.⁴

Prepared especially for the fiftieth anniversary of the Saint-Jean-Baptiste Society of Montreal, *Nos Hommes Forts* is a patchwork compilation of some of Montpetit's more popular journalistic pieces. Extolling the virtues of heroic Canadians—mostly French-Canadians—in the interest of patriotism, Montpetit chooses as his grandest models such popular figures as Napoleon Mathurin (who had just survived the shipwreck of the S.S. Bahama), Claude Giguere, Jos. Montferrand, and Petrus Labelle; yet in order to suggest the epic proportions that his chronicle of heroes might have reached if he so desired, the author lists other worthies who can be mentioned only in passing. He boasts characteristically: "Si j'entreprendrais deraconter les exploits de tous nos Alcides Canadiens, je tarrirais mon encrier à la tâche. On verrait Duhaime, debout sur la berge du fleuve, arrêter un *crible* emporté par un courant rapide. . ."⁵ Then follow references to one Giroux who took the place of his horse in the shafts of the wagon when his horse was too tired to make the summit of a hill; and Gobeil who, Samson-like, brought down a polling place on the heads of thirty opponents.⁶

Sulte's mention of Duhaime, on the other hand, occurs in a monograph. A distinguished student of French-Canadian history, Sulte writes, in part at least, to remind French-Canadians of their heritage. Although the *Histoire de Montferrand* was originally published in 1883, the earliest edition that I have been able to see is the second, which appeared in the following year. There Duhaime appears only once—in the customary list of well-known strong men. In subsequent editions, however, Sulte elaborates upon this reference:

J'ai aussi vu Maxime Duhaime prendre à pleines mains et sortir de la foule un batailleur redouté, puis, le replantant sur ses quilles, lui dire avec une bonhomie charmante:—Comportez-vous mieux, ce n'est pas joli.⁷

This anecdoté is similar to that collected by Professor Dorson in which the seventeen year old Maxine manhandles the more famous Montferrand in like fashion.⁸

It is interesting not only that Duhaime and similar heroes should appear in the popular culture, as can be attested by the heavily topical chauvinism of *Nos Hommes Forts*, but also in the careful investigations of a scholar whose main work is an impressive eight-volume history of the French-Canadians. In any case, these references, minor in themselves, serve to document Max Duhaime's appearance in the nineteenth century.

NOTES

¹ (Cambridge, 1952).² Ibid., p. 283.³ (Québec, 1884).⁴ (Montreal, 1884); reprinted in *Mélanges historiques: Études éparses et inédites* XII, edited by Gerard Malchelosé (Montreal, 1924), pp. 9-60. Subsequent reference is made to the latter edition.⁵ *Hommes Forts*, p. 144. *Crible* is a form of *crib*, which, according to the *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*, is "a frame of logs secured under water to form a pier, dam, etc."⁶ Professor Dorson's informant, Joe Racine of Lake Linden, tells a similar anecdote in truncated form with Duham as hero. *Bloodstoppers*, pp. 90-91.⁷ *Montferrand*, p. 55.⁸ *Bloodstoppers*, pp. 89-90.

THE 1960 HOOSIER FESTIVAL

Robert W. Montgomery—Pauline W. Montgomery, Directors

TIME August 14-18, 1960

PLACE Clifty Inn, Clifty Falls State Park at Madison

COST Registration, meals and lodging from (including) Sunday evening dinner through and including Thursday morning breakfast, \$50.

PROGRAM

SUNDAY Registration on arrival.

8:00 P.M. Introductions and "Get Acquainted Party."

MORNINGS 9:00-11:00

1. Migration Patterns.

2. Genealogy.

3. Folklore Collecting.

AFTERNOONS 2:30-4:30

1. Pioneer Professions.

2. Transportation.

3. Houses and Furnishings.

MONDAY EVENING

Folk Music and Play Party Games

TUESDAY EVENING

Old Fashioned Ice Cream Social (Everybody taking a turn at the freezers), Songs, Ballads.

WEDNESDAY EVENING

Song Fest and "Our Hoosier Heritage."

DESCRIPTION OF COURSES

MIGRATIONS. The study of the migrations to Indiana will deal with three of the most important groups: Southern, Quaker and German. Discussions will cover character of the people, motives for settlement, localities, influences on religion, education, politics, architecture, foods, etc.

GENEALOGY. Study will include methods of tracing. Miss Waters will give her excellent lecture, "The Better the Deed," and there will be time for individual problems.

FOLKLORE COLLECTING. There will be instruction in techniques, anecdotes of collecting experiences, and one afternoon devoted to actual collecting.

PIONEER PROFESSIONS. Education, Law and Politics will be treated historically and anecdotally, with some personal reminiscences.

TRANSPORTATION. Transportation on the rivers will be treated both historically and anecdotally. The discussions of the canals will include both those constructed and those projected. The session on turn-pikes and bridges will feature Mr. Bock's slide-illustrated talk on covered bridges.

HOUSES AND FURNISHINGS. The study will deal with architectural development and period furnishings of 1810 to 1850. The talks will be illustrated and the final afternoon will be devoted to a field trip visiting houses in and around Madison.

FACULTY

ROBERT AND PAULINE MONTGOMERY, DIRECTORS. Mr. Montgomery is History Instructor at Sandcreek High School and President of the Hoosier Folklore Society. Mrs. Montgomery is a teacher at Connersville High School.

JOYCE ALLEN, REGISTRAR AND SECRETARY. Joyce is a Decatur County folksinger from Sandcreek High School.

MARGARET WATERS. Miss Waters is a teacher at Arsenal Tech High School and is well known for her work in Genealogy.

BRUCE BUCKLEY. Bruce is in the Audio-Visual Department of Indiana University and a candidate for the Ph.D. degree in Folklore at I.U. He has presented many television programs on folklore. He is past president of the Hoosier Folklore Society and has collected folklore in the Ohio valley.

GROVER BROWN. Mr. Brown, is a retired county school superintendent and has been active in Brown County politics.

(Continued on page 32)

BY OTTO ERNEST RAYBURN
Eureka Springs, Arkansas

SOME FABULOUS MONSTERS AND OTHER FOLK BELIEFS FROM THE OZARKS

FABULOUS MONSTERS

VANCE RANDOLPH OF Eureka Springs, Arkansas devoted thirty-four pages of his book, *We Always Lie to Strangers* (pp. 41-74) to fabulous monsters in the Ozarks. These beasts, which belong to folklore and probably never existed, are the gowrow, jimplicute, high-behind, kingdoodle (or wangdoodle), gollygog, willipus-wallipus, snawfus, bingbuffer, hickelsnooper, darby-hick, moogie, chaw-green, side-hill hooper, bogie-bird, clew-bird, fillyloo and the "behemoth." Many of these creatures were as big as a box car and the earth trembled when they set foot upon it.

The gowrow, it appears got a build-up in rural Arkansas in the 1880s and received some newspaper publicity. It was reported to be

a lizard-like animal about twenty feet long and had enormous tusks like an elephant. "There is a persistent report," says Randolph, "that gowrows hatched from eggs as big as beer kegs. Some say that the female carried it newly hatched young in a pouch like a possum, but the old-timers do not agree about this."¹

The high-behind was a lizard as large as a buffalo with its hind legs about ten times as long as its front ones. It could "lap a man up like a toad-frog ketchin' flies."² The snawfus was a mythical albino deer with supernatural powers. It could jump through the tree tops with ease. The fillyloo was a bird of giant size that built its nest upside down. A school teacher at Cotter, Arkansas told Randolph that the eggs are lighter than air and if one is pushed out of the nest it disappears in the blue.³

Perhaps one of the most overrated monsters of our folklore is the hinge-tailed bingbuffer. *The Missouri Review*⁴ reprints from the *Jefferson City Daily Tribune*,⁵ the following tale which is credited to Colonel W. J. Zevely.

The hinge-tailed bingbuffer is nearly, if not quite extinct at this time (said the Colonel), I think the last one was killed in Osage County about 1881, or the spring of 1882. The animal is shaped something like a hippopotamus, only considerable larger and has a flat tapering tail which sometimes reaches the length of forty feet. Its legs are short and owing to the great weight of its body locomotion is necessarily slow. But nature supplies the hinge-tailed bingbuffer with the means of obtaining food. Underneath its jaws is a pouch that will hold at least a bushel. When in quest of food the animal fills its pouch with stones weighing from two to three pounds each. Where the tail joins the body there is a hinge, and when the animal desires to kill anything it takes a stone from its pouch with its tail, and hurls it with wonderful accuracy and force to a distance of several hundred yards. Talk about the accuracy and execution of a rifleball! You ought to see a hinged-tail bingbuffer throw a stone. . . As I said before, I believe the last one was killed some years ago.

FOLK BELIEFS

1. It takes a blue-eyed woman working with a brown-eyed woman to make good lye soap.
2. Eat nine messes of poke sallet greens in the spring and you will stay well.

3. Lucky is the person born on Christmas Day. He will never be hanged.
4. The best time to wean a calf is on the third day before the full moon.
5. Eggs set in the dark of the moon will not hatch well.
6. Pumpkin seed tea is good to expel tapeworms.
7. Mad dogs don't bother a person who carries a piece of dogwood in his pocket.
8. You can split a storm cloud by swinging an ax in the air.
9. When the Devil appears he doesn't make any tracks or leave a shadow.
10. The seven-year itch is cured by washing all over in water to which a little poke root has been added.
11. Water witches prefer a forked peach limb when dowsing for water.
12. Coffee grounds thrown under the steps will keep ants away.
13. A horse hair will turn into a snake in an old watering trough.
14. A feather crown found in the pillow of a dying person is a good sign.
15. Bloodstoppers may tell their secret to only three persons.
16. Take three drinks from an Ozark spring and you will always return for more.
17. If a man's ears reach above his eyebrows, he is a smart trader.
18. If a man's wife is "triflin'" on him, he can make everything right by going into the woods at night and boring a hole in a paw paw tree.
19. To cure chickens of the roup, soak a rag in coal oil and tie it around the fowl's neck.
20. Thunder will sour milk and ruin a setting of eggs.
21. A pregnant woman eats raw onion to produce rich milk for her expected baby.
22. Stones with holes in them, found under water, are good to carry as luck pieces.
23. Corn is planted when the elm leaves are as big as a mouse's ear.
24. To ease the toothache, pick the teeth with a splinter from a tree that has been struck by lightning.
25. It brings good luck to burn the father's hat when a male child is born.
26. If a cow eats a lot of acorns or turnips, it makes her go dry.
27. Handling toads will cause warts on the hands.
28. A turtle holds on until it thunders.

29. A coachwhip snake will whip a person with its tail.
30. There is only *one* belled buzzard and it is a charmed bird.

I report the above items as I have heard them in the Ozarks. Some of them are still taken seriously, others belong to the past and are regarded with amusement. All are a part of the weave of our folklore pattern. In my "Ozark Folk Encyclopedia," a typescript and scrapbook of 226 volumes, I have listed hundreds of such items, obtained from the folk during the past forty years. Vance Randolph has recorded many of the superstitions of the region in his *Ozark Superstitions*, a monumental work that includes both belief and practice. Much of our folklore cannot be illustrated with case history, but I will give brief reports on the last three items of the above list.

THE TERRAPIN AND THE HAWK

In January, 1957, a milk hauler was running his route between Gainsville and Ava in the Missouri Ozarks. He heard a commotion in the bushes by the side of the road and stopped to investigate. He found a terrapin holding on to a hawk's toe. How the bird and the terrapin got into this position, no one knows, but there they were. The hawk tried to fly, but the weight of the terrapin held it down. The man picked them up, tossed them into his truck, and carried them to town.

A crowd collected on the town square and everyone was interested to see how long the terrapin would hold on. The whittlers left their perch under the big elm, folded their knives and put their whittling sticks away. The boys pitching horseshoes behind the blacksmith shop stopped their game and joined the crowd. Men poured out of the pool-hall for ring-side seats. They got out their watches and settled down to see what would happen.

The sun moved slowly through the afternoon sky. A popcorn peddler made his way through the crowd, doing a good business. A boy went to the spring for a bucket of water, and it was soon emptied. There was not a cloud in the sky and no possibility of thunder. Had a storm appeared with electrical display, it might have made history out of folklore. But no cloud appeared and the terrapin continued its hold on the toe of the hawk.

Exactly four hours after the pair was picked up, the terrapin loosened its hold and the hawk was free. It was uninjured, but would be a marked bird the rest of its life. The show was over, but it was a good one while it lasted. It might have been billed as a double

feature. No show was ever staged with less action for even the hawk seemed resigned to its fate and seldom moved. But it proved that members of the tortoise family do have a tendency to "hold on" for a considerable length of time. Perhaps there is more science in folklore than we think.

THE ANTICS OF THE COACHWHIP SNAKE

Take the superstition about the coachwhip snake. This reptile is supposed to attack human beings and whip them with its tail. Folklore says that it gets hold of the upper lip, or possibly the ear of the victim as a fulcrum, and then lashes with its powerful tail. For several years I tried to find some one in the Ozarks who had been whipped by one of these fabulous reptiles, but I did not succeed. I heard rumors, but they could not be documented. The nearest approach to such a whipping came from Charles A. Pack, a farmer in Hickory County, Missouri. In a letter dated September 6, 1954, he says:

A few weeks ago I went out in the pasture to see about the cattle when I met up with a coachwhip snake about five feet long. He was right at the edge of the path, and I stepped within about six inches of him, and that is something unusual for a coachwhip does not make it a practice to lay still and let someone step that close to him. He just raised straight up in the air and grabbed hold of my pants at the pocket. For some unknown reason I failed to stand still and see what his intentions were, but somehow in the confusion that followed he lost his hold, and I barely missed a whipping that would have made folklore history. After the reptile lost his hold, he completely circled me, beating the ground with his tail, then he bid me a silent farewell and went on his way.

THE BELLED BUZZARD

The belled-buzzard, like the legendary "Wandering Jew," never dies. In 1950, A Shelby County, Missouri farmer, working in his field, heard the tinkling of a bell in the sky. Looking upward he saw a lone buzzard silhouetted against the blue. The bird came nearer and the sound of the bell was louder. Then it wheeled and soared away and the sound of the bell disappeared. The farmer reported the incident to the press and radio and it made quite a stir. Old-timers claimed it was a ghost bird and a symbol of evil. Irvin Cobb, the Kentucky writer, put a belled-buzzard into one of

his stories to trace the location of the body of a man who had been murdered. Another writer indicates that, according to folklore, the bird leads a charmed life and on its neck is a never silent bell.

Who put the bell on the buzzard? That is a question for the big quiz program. The theory put out by the scientific school is that the birds had become a nuisance, or were scattering some animal disease, and some farmer trapped one of them and tied a small bell to its neck. It developed into a legend tinged with the preternatural. The ominous bird is supposed to appear just before of a storm and is followed by flood, drouth, pestilence, or some other disaster.

I have many more such case histories of folklore in the making, but none of them prove anything. There is many a slip twixt the cup and the lip in collecting folklore.

NOTES

¹ *We Always Lie to Strangers* (New York, 1951), pp. 41-43.

² *Ibid.*, p. 47.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 67.

⁴ (April, 1944), p. 367.

⁵ (July 23, 1891).

⁶ Cf. *We Always Lie to Strangers*, pp. 51-52.

THE 1960 HOOSIER FESTIVAL

(Continued from page 26)

EUGENE BOCK. Mr. Bock is editor of the *Anderson Bulletin* and is an authority on early transportation and travel in Indiana. He is chairman of the Covered Bridge Committee of the Indiana Historical Society.

JOHN WINDLE. Mr. Windle is the proprietor of the Shrewsbury House in Madison and, as an antique dealer, is interested in furniture. He is an authority on architecture, restorations and furnishings.

WILLARD HEISS. Mr. Heiss, of Indianapolis, is a Birthright Quaker and a student of the history of Quakers in Indiana.

(In addition there will be lecturers for single sessions—a boat captain, a lawyer, a descendant of early German settlers, and others.)

For reservations write to:

Miss Joyce Allen
Route 5
Greensburg, Indiana

MARIE WALTER
Brooklyn College

THE FABLE OF THE FOLKLORIST

THE STUDY OF Folklore in its professional status has only lately been recognized by the popular press and other communication media. As a result of the eagerness to report this emerging phenomenon, the hapless scholar of folksong, literature, and custom has been publicized in a variety of rather amazing guises.

Traditionally Americans have pictured their folklorists as aimless vagrants trudging the dust-dry back roads of the Southern Appalachians in search of barefoot minstrels; or as library pedants pursuing the genealogy and career of such national favorites as Johnny Appleseed and Paul Bunyan. In the past year or so, however, the professional folklorist has come under scrutiny in fiction and in (so-called) fact in a number of leading popular journals; he has even made his TV debut.

What has emerged is a fearful creature who is depicted as preying on the cherished oral tradition of naive, unschooled folk only to turn this booty into selfish profit (usually in its most gross form—academic publication).

This unprincipled Svengali was colorfully portrayed in a short story entitled "The Heroes in the Dark House" by Benedict Kiely which appeared in *The New Yorker* magazine.¹

Anyone who pursues the study of Folklore through the popular media is well aware that there is but one area for serious collection and research; that favored land is, of course, Ireland. (The most respectable scholars devote their efforts to an examination of the habitat, customs, and life cycle of the elusive Leprechaun.) So it is that we find ourselves on the Emerald Isle in Mr. Kiely's account. Now, if there is to be a villain (the folklorist) there must also be a hero, and he is Mr. Arthur Broderick, one of the genuine folk of old Eire. On the other hand, so reprehensible is Broderick's nemesis that, though his parents may have graced him with a Christian name at birth, our author refers to him only as "young scholar"—certainly a damning epithet in itself.

Young scholar's signal crime, we soon learn, is that he has compiled and edited a book of Irish folktales which has been well received. One reviewer of the book is even so crass as to compare the writer to that other charlatan, Jeremiah Curtin. Notices of this insidious volume disturb Broderick who has been jotting down tales told by his neighbors and sending them off, unsuccessfully, to various publishers across the seas. With no small malice he refers to the editorial pruning rooms of these establishments as "the well at the world's end."

Young Scholar has defiled the virginal realm of story and legend by compiling, comparing, and categorizing though at one point he is credited with at least having the decency of being natively Irish. But, in the presence of a genuine purveyor of folklore (A. Broderick), he self-consciously apologizes: "Publishing is slow . . . they have little vision." He goes on to further castigate himself and his colleagues by acknowledging that his own book was published only because of "the fortunate chance of his meeting a publisher who thought he, the young scholar, might some day write a book that would be a money-maker." Mr. Kiely makes it clear that the tales in Arthur Broderick's nine-time rejected manuscript were set down with "love and care," implying by contrast that such devotion was scarcely feasible in the case of young scholar since: "Careful research and a wide knowledge of comparative folklore have gone into his work."

The short story ends inconclusively but depressingly enough as young scholar sets off for further plunder and Broderick is left in his shadowy old house with a few loyal ghost-heroes of legend and saga. The reader, of course, is left with a pretty low regard for the craft and practices of the folklorist.

Many folklorists will recall the now classic *New Yorker* story, "Quigley 873," which kidded their pursuits and methods in a good-humored enough way.² Professor Quigley's team was engaged in collecting lover's leap legends. Each site was carefully examined, catalogued, and consecutively numbered. Number 873 turned out to be a rather remarkable find in that the lovers had leapt *onto* the cliff from the valley, instead of the more conventional reverse way. Quigley's test of the veracity of an informant is particularly instructive to the folklorist. To determine whether a person was the area's oldest inhabitant, and hence the most likely to know the legend of his local lover's leap, Quigley would search the vocabulary of the informant to see if he regularly said "mebbe" for maybe, "allus" for always, "sezee," etc. The final verification was the inhabitant's recollection of having been carried as a child by his father to the railway station to watch Lincoln's funeral train pass by.

But innocent spoofs such as Quigley, have now given way to blatant, cudged attacks on the career and endeavors of the folklorist.

Without seeming provocation a self-styled "old down-East bench-comber" sought out the pages of the November, 1958, *Atlantic*³ to denounce the "folklore set." His particular object of derision was a certain audacious folklorist who had collected tales on the Maine sea coast the previous summer. Bench-comber rallies to the defense of his fellow "old coots" and warns the society sponsoring the research that a fraud has been perpetrated on it. The professor, he charges, as an outsider, was obviously duped with phoney stories. Anyone could tell that the tales recorded and published are not authentic down-East folklore because they contain only one cuss word. The protestant then submits a bona fide version of a Maine story in which every third to fourth word is punctuated with the most vivid profanity.

The one reassuring aspect to come out of this travesty was the unexpected response of *Atlantic* readers whose letters of rebuttal filled the columns of the magazine for several months afterward. A firm vote of approbation for the professor and his collected material even came in from one of the besieged old coots, himself.

Wayland Hand in his message to the American Folklore Society in 1958 commented: "Scholarly pursuit of folklore has hardly kept pace with the popular interest in the subject." In witness thereof, I should like to cite a third, final, and most vituperous indictment of the folklorist in our popular press. The vehicle: *Mademoiselle* magazine. The topic: the new upsurge of interest in folk music, camouflaged under the title "Life Among the Guitars."⁴

The scene opens in Greenwich Village—the Washington Square waterless fountain. Sunday afternoon: the true proponents of folk music assemble. Sitting among a clutter of cigarette butts one musician adjusts her false pony tail—this is a clever ruse to disguise her true Madison Avenue identity. A pale green Lambretta screeches to a halt. A bearded lad alights with his five-string banjo and a sheaf of tunes on the folk music top ten.

Across this idyllic scene falls the ominous shadow of the "traditionalist," who is described as "opposing the increasing distortion of folk music through its popular diffusion." He is first cousin to that other interloper, dubbed the "folk bore," who is tedious enough to suggest that folk songs have a history, and perhaps even an interrelation. Having admitted to the existence of these pests, the article must go on to define their activities. "Enthusiasm for folklore has spilled over into college curriculums," *Mademoiselle* reveals, and with unconcealed amazement continues, "Indiana U. offers a complete folklore program—even grants M.A.'s and Ph.D.'s." The article admits reluctantly that "curiosity about folklore may be inspired by an English prof with a side interest in balladry, such as MacEdward Leach, or a faculty folklorist like Herbert Halpert." But *Mlle.* quickly disposes of this seamier side of folklore and reassures its readers that most college folklore societies are spontaneous, anti-academic—quite harmless—gatherings of spirited students who scorn the musty folk bores.

There follows a detailed evaluation of the semantic and empirical differentiation between a hootenanny and a wing-ding. We are finally consoled that for all the inherent pressures of the professional folklorist, the art of folklore will "not be returned to the custodianship of the *archives* set now that it has been discovered by thousands of people." Thus, we are promised a panacea in which folklore is at last rescued from the churlish grasp of the folklorists and restored to its rightful possessors, presumably the artificial pony-tail set.

The characterization of the folklorist on television⁵ served only to further darken the gloomy picture we have seen forming. The

locale is once again Ireland and, just as in Mr. Kiely's story, a folklorist bursts in on the placid naiveté of an isolated village. The good professor is doing field research on—that's right—leprechauns. Unfortunately the residents of this particular hamlet do not believe in leprechauns but they try to fool the professor, and he tries to fool them, and it all gets terribly complicated. He is also surprisingly adept at imitating banshee cries, which wins him no small respect from the villagers. By the time the half hour is nearly done, the local denizens are all stalking leprechauns and the professor is making a speech about the really important thing being that Americans believe that the Irish believe in leprechauns, since a second-hand superstition is better than none at all. Then—and I'm still not convinced that this wasn't some operating difficulty on my set—it seemed that there was a final close-up of the professor showing a cloven hoof where his foot rightly ought to have been.

Just what is the image of the folklorist that has been created in the popular mind? Scrutiny of social stratification has become one of our most engrossing national pastimes. We pour over questionnaires, tables, surveys, and all other matter of statistics to determine where we fit into the grid of society, what status we are seeking, and the relative height of the brows of our friends and associates.

I am afraid that the folklorist draws a very poor popularity rating. As we have seen, he is envisioned as a rather musty pedagogue—member of the contemptible "archives set"—who is not content to putter amongst his crumbling notebooks and scratchy tapes, but must usurp the natural good fun of high-spirited troubadours and prefabricators. Even among our colleagues in the humanities and social sciences there is considerable disagreement as to just where the folklorist fits in. Thelma James has remarked that her fellow members of the English Department at a large Midwestern university frequently ask her, "What is a folklorist? What do you do?" It is hardly surprising then that persons far removed from Academe should be confused about the position of the folklorist, particularly after he has been so badly mauled in popular accounts.

To the folklorist himself falls the duty of publicizing a true and positive image of his profession. It is not enough merely to criticize already existing opinions. Every folklorist will have his own ideas about how this image can best be projected, just as, indeed, he will have his own concept of what that image actually is. I should like to submit for consideration several means by which I believe the folklorist can best promote effective public relations.

First: we can let the public in on our most closely guarded secret—that folktales are not the exclusive property of children, and that the sum total of the world's folktales are not contained in those overworked volumes of Grimm and Andersen. Such books as *The Inland Whale* and the *Borzoi Book of French Folk Tales* have done much to educate the public in this area. A review of *Tales of Ancient India* in *The New York Times* very definitely caught the spirit when it bemoaned the demise of oral story-telling and proposed: "Why not story-tellers in the supermarkets? Men can tell stories better than books."⁶ And this, mind you, comes not from a folklorist but from a novelist and world traveler. Surely we could win other converts.

The day may be far off when we tarry over the freezer cabinet to pick up a new version of Type 480 along with our frozen peas. It is quite conceivable, however, that good narrators could be heard over those more conventional forms of communication—television and radio. A few years back TV-land discovered folktales and ecstatically announced: "This is the television of the future. This is an area of our literature we have overlooked. This is box office."⁷ It is kinder not to recount the outcome of this enthusiasm, especially the Shirley Temple extravaganzas. It there any reason, though, why an American Indian legend, a tale from the Finn cycle or a Norse saga could not be as entertaining and as "produceable" as the well-worn Ali Baba or Rumpelstiltskin? The opportunity for enlightenment is great in this area.

Another extremely valuable contribution which the folklorist could make is the collection, publication, and dissemination of *genuine* folksongs. The repertoire of the leaders of folk singing groups is pathetically meager. Was there ever a get-together that didn't include shouting renditions of "John Henry," "Marching to Pretoria," "Streets of Laredo," and very little more? Too often the folklorist in his zeal for collection and cataloguing tends to cache his material in record archives, scholarly journals, and private papers far beyond the reach of the ordinary performer. The folklorist would be welcomed as a participant and an innovator in the many folksong and folk dance groups which are springing up in colleges and communities throughout the country.

If we take folklore out of the realm of the spontaneous and submit it solely to the voice of statistical tabulation, we have destroyed the very essence of that which we sought to preserve. If, on the other hand, the public accepts any popularized vulgarity as folklore, without discrimination or investigation, it has cheated itself and

contributed to the further breakdown of any semblance of an indigenous culture. Somewhere between these two extremes we can hope to find the valid image of the folklorist. Meanwhile we shall look forward to that happy day when the "old coots" and the "archives set" will sit down side-by-side in the peaceable kingdom of understanding and co-operation.

NOTES

¹ Benedict Kiely, "The Heroes in the Dark House," *The New Yorker* (January 17, 1959), pp. 28-32.

² Frank Sullivan, "Quigley 873," *The New Yorker* (December 29, 1951), pp. 23-25.

³ John Gould, "Research Project," *The Atlantic* (November, 1958), pp. 179-180.

⁴ Grace Jan Waldman, "Life Among the Guitars," *Mademoiselle* (May, 1959), pp. 88-89, 14, 27, 32.

⁵ John Sherman and Derry Quinn, "The Leprechaun," *Douglas Fairbanks Presents* (WNEW-TV, New York), March 30, 1959 and June 16, 1959.

⁶ Robert Payne, "Tales for the Telling," *The New York Times Book Review* (July 12, 1959), p. 4.

⁷ Val Adams, "TV-Radio Notes," *The New York Times* (April 7, 1957), Section 2, p. 11.

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FOLKLORE ON RECORDS

BACK IN THE GOOD OLD DAYS when a Child ballad was a folksong and hardly anything else was, scholar and enthusiast alike seem to have had nothing to argue about but the Communal Theory. Like everything else today, things are a good deal more complex. There is no such thing as a pure folksong any more, even the most sacrosanct songs having been shown to owe much of their vitality to print or recording. And so the major question confronting one interested in folksong is no longer solely one of origin, but of style and dissemination. We are no longer only interested in what individual

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or what class creates traditional songs; we are also concerned with what the folk do with the songs when they sing them, and how they perform them.

There are two camps concerned with the actual definition of traditional song. One, aligning themselves with the older theorists, say that a folksong is one which shows signs that it has been changed by the oral process. The other says that any song that a member of the folk sings is a folksong. The former group then looks to the song alone as evidence deciding whether it is traditional. The other looks to both the song and the singer.

Naturally this problem constantly presents itself to the person who is attempting to review the records of "folksong" which are being issued today. Because the word "folk" on the jacket of a record is beginning to guarantee a certain sale for that record, many are emerging which either have pop singers singing pseudo-folksongs in a pseudo-folkstyle, or folk-singers singing songs that they have written, but singing them in traditional style, or many other similar configurations of songs and sounds that are there (seemingly) to give ulcers to the reviewer. Nevertheless, there are many records being issued that demand comment.

Odetta is a sophisticated singer who has been singing and studying folksongs and folk-style for a number of years. She has a marvelous, rich voice, and brings to much of her folk material a real warmth and understanding. Her performances have always been popular in approach and continue to be so, but she, of all the urban folksingers, is to my mind the best. Her latest recording, *My Eyes Have Seen* (Vanguard, VRS 9059) though not her best to date, is still a good indication of this singer's work. As usual, she draws much upon Negro work songs, chain-gang songs, and spirituals. Occasionally things get out of hand, such as on "The Foggy Dew, but these are few moments compared to the many of extreme pleasure.

The other side of the same coin is found in Folkway's recording of *Lightnin' Hopkins* (FS 3822). Here is a Negro blues singer, who sings very much in traditional style, but who sings mostly songs which he wrote himself, or which have been written recently by other singers in the same tradition. This is a type of song which is very hard to classify, for often it contains stanzas which are definitely traditional in origin, and others that are highly individual and at times, literary. Hopkins is a singer who has a great deal of instrumental virtuosity. He is very much in the street singer tradition, and is one of the best

of that type. He claims to have known and been taught by Lemon Jefferson, and his technique and attitude do not belie this.

Brownie McGhee is another blues singer that began his career in the country blues tradition. For a number of years he has been gravitating toward a more modern kind of rendition, and his latest Folkways release, *Brownie McGhee Sings the Blues* (FG 3557) shows that he has managed to erase practically any trace of this early style from his performance. His songs, mostly self-composed, are geared for the rock-and-roll audience, and for this reason, among others, is of little interest to folklorists, except as an index to popular taste (and therefore perhaps the "folk-style" of some future generation).

There is a further problem concerned with "folk-style" in the U.S. It has only recently been recognized (and then only by some) that early Country and Western recordings were, to a great extent, a record of what the folk were singing when the effects of instrumentation were just hitting the mountains. There is no doubt that the performers on these early discs were traditional songs. The only doubts as to their authenticity could have been leveled at their style, but now we must realize that this was the style that most "folk" were singing in those days, therefore a folk-style.

There have been a number of people collecting these early records for some time, but it wasn't until one these collectors, Harry Smith, put together the Folkways *Anthology of American Folk Music* (FP 251-3) that the greater public was made cognizant of the importance of these records as folk-song performances. Recently The New Lost City Ramblers was formed, a group that reproduces the style and the songs of these Country and Western records. They have already recorded their second disc, entitled *Old Timey Songs for Children*, (Folkways, FC 7064.) The title is somewhat misleading in that some of the songs are certainly not children's songs ("Barbara Allen," for instance.) Nevertheless, the record is an authentic delight, including such wonderful songs as "Hopalong Peter," "Rabbit Chase" and "Charley He's a Good Ol Man."

A development of this early mountain instrumental style is known as "bluegrass." In this style the instrument has taken the burden of the performance from the voice. The most common "bluegrass" combination is made up of 5-string banjo (picked in a fast style named after its primary exponent, Earl Scruggs), rhythm guitar, and string bass. Often a fiddle and/or a mandolin is added. These musicians still sing many traditional songs, and from this aspect they are the perhaps the last in the long line of people who have these songs.

Last as the instrument has become the most important aspect of this music, the words of the songs have been de-emphasized, and will probably eventually be forgotten. In this respect it is decadent folk music, but to some the instrumental side of this style is so lively and exciting a development that they feel it will revitalize folk song. Two recent releases feature bluegrass bands singing some songs traditional in origin. One of these, *Mountain Music, Bluegrass Style*, (Folkways FA 2318) features a number of different bands. For those who like "bluegrass" this is a fine record. For those that don't, or haven't heard any, this record will stand as a fine introduction. The music is complemented by fine notes by Mike Seeger. The second record features just one of the best of the bluegrass bands, Earl Taylor and the Stony Mountain Boys, (also to be heard on the Folkways record). Though the record is entitled *Folk Songs from the Blue Grass* (United Artists, UAL 3049) only about half of the songs included could be considered so. The album is graced by notes by Alan Lomax, who is not only one of the best writers in the field of folksong, but also probably the most voluble exponent of bluegrass music today.

To this reviewer the actual music of the "bluegrass bands" is not sufficient to capture lasting enthusiasm, only the sporadic interest that is captured momentarily by other popular styles. A much more exciting folk-instrumental treat is contained in the record, *Nonesuch* (Folkways, FA 2439.) Here, two fine instrumentalists who have been working with folk music for many years, Peter Seeger and Frank Hamilton, give us an indication of what two creative musicians can do with folk tunes after having absorbed the varieties of musical cultures that one can run into through concerts, records etc. To some this record will appear as one big joke (which it may be). Many others will simply not like it for its hodge-podge character. Still others will get a great deal of enjoyment out of its frankly improvised sound.

A further problem confronting folklorists is where song-parodies fit into the folk-song picture. Especially in the armed services, these songs can be created and transmitted just as traditional songs are. Yet, they are much more sophisticated in style and eclectic in presentation than folk songs usually are. Oscar Brand is probably the foremost authority and singer of this type of song, and has recorded many discs of this material. His latest is one of his best, entitled *The Wild Blue Yonder*, (Elektra EKL-168). As is indicated from the title, these are parodies sung by men of the Air Force, indeed

taken from the collection of an Air Force man, one Capt. William J. Starr. Though Brand says, in the notes that he did not bowdlerize these songs, the force of that language is not that which one would expect to encounter from any sort of servicemen.

Some other records received which are of some interest are:

1. *Mickey Miller Sings Folk-Songs* (Folkways, FA 2393). An L.A. urban folk-singer singing many old stand-by songs in a sometimes effective, sometimes idiosyncratic manner.

2. *Cricket on the Hearth George Britton sings* (Twentieth Century Records, #2). A Philadelphia singer, with a full, rich voice who sings the most common folk songs in a style closer to the minstrel tradition than any other.

3. *Songs of the Maritimes* (Folkways FW 8744). Alan Mills' latest in his excellent series documenting Canadian folk-song. Perhaps of greatest interest here is the inclusion of a number of Larry Gorman's songs.

4. *American Playparties* (Folkways, FC 7604). Pete Seeger, daughter Mika, and Rev. Larry Eisenberg performing playparties in a record obviously more intended to teach these songs than to entertain.

5. *Vivien Richman Sings Folk Songs of West Pennsylvania* (Folkways FG 3568). A Pittsburgh folksinger singing songs which are mainly of interest from an historical and a regional point of view. The singer is an accomplished performer, but the material takes precedence here.

BOOK REVIEWS

A SONG BOOK

Wit and Mirth: or Pills to Purge Melancholy. Edited by Thomas D'Urfey (1719-20). Facsimile edition, with an introduction by Cyrus L. Day. (New York: Folklore Library Publishers, Inc., 1959). The 6 volumes in 3. 2220 pp. \$25.00.

It is welcome news that one of the most valuable English song books is once again in print. *Pills*, as the collection is commonly known, comprises 1144 songs and poems, most of them with music. Begun as a single volume by Henry Playford and completed as a six-volume work by Thomas D'Urfey, *Pills* was more than twenty years in the making. It was compiled largely from printed sources—broad­sides and engraved single-sheet songs, drolleries, playhouse songs, and such varied collections as John Playford's *Choice Ayres* series and Nathaniel Thompson's *A Choice Collection of 180 Loyal Songs*. Thus *Pills* reflects the broad range of taste in the decades centering around 1700. It is no surprise to see that Purcell leads the ninety-six known composers with over seventy settings, but the popularity of Ackroyde, Blow, Farmer, Clarke, and Leveridge is easily apparent too. Among poets Shakespeare, Milton, Donne, and Herrick are not here, but Dryden and Congreve, Sedley and Rochester are. D'Urfey's contribution of a third of all the verse texts represents rather extreme editorial indulgence, yet it is fair to note that his work was liberally used in the editions with which he had no connection.

Probably the majority of both tunes and texts are anonymous, for despite the strong courtly flavor *Pills* is essentially a popular collection. Seven Child ballads appear, most of them drawn from broadsides or from Ravenscroft's early seventeenth-century volumes. The preservation of numerous broadside tunes makes *Pills* an important repository: "Greensleeves," "Packington's Pound," "The Duke of Norfolk," "Cold and Raw," "Chimney Sweep," "Row Well, You Mariners," "Old Simon the King," "Lilliburlero," "Shackley Hay,"—these tune names barely suggest the richness of the collection. It is significant too that for some of the broadsides originally printed without music, the *Pills* version supplies us with our only tune. All in all, it is a fine song book, with enough Restoration wit and mirth to justify the full title; texts are not lopped to fit a format nor castrated to placate delicate sensibilities; one's only regret is that musical texts are now and then corrupt, without amendment from one edition to another.

The present reprint is anomalous in that it does not reproduce the eighteenth-century edition directly, but is rather a photo-facsimile of a line-for-line "replica" of the 1719-20 work published in the 1870's. While textually useful, both reprints offer embarrassments to the bibliographer. For the 1719-20 edition exists in two states, the first entitled *Songs Compleat, Pleasant and Divertive* (vols. I-V only), the second reverting to the original *Wit and Mirth* title; now the nineteenth-century reprint uses only *Wit and Mirth* title-pages, but the running heads show it to be derived from a mixed set, with vols. II and VI from the *Wit and Mirth* issue, the other four from *Songs Compleat*. The present facsimile reproduces none of the title-pages, but in other respects is faithful to its source; the nineteenth-century replica in turn is remarkably accurate. Nonetheless, in the absence of thorough collation one cannot be assured of complete textual integrity at any point, and despite the slight loss in legibility it would have been better to guarantee authenticity by reproducing the 1719-20 text directly.

For this edition Cyrus L. Day has contributed a knowledgeable introduction, describing the growth and contemporary reception of the collection. Fuller treatment of some points may be found in Day's article on *Pills* in *RES*, VIII (1932), 177-84, and his introduction to *The Songs of Thomas D'Urfey* (1933). A handicap always facing the user of *Pills* persists in this edition as well: there is no consolidated index to the six volumes. Fortunately one may consult the first-line listings in the Day-Murrie *English Song-Books, 1651-1702* (1940), which includes all editions of *Pills* among the books indexed. Entries there offer much additional data concerning texts, but are disappointing on the identification of tunes.

It is a compliment to the durability and importance of such a song book as *Pills* that one should wish the twentieth-century version to be equipped with contemporary refinements. But the more dependable its text and the more accessible its contents, the more useful it can be. Of the enjoyment its pages offer, there is no question.

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ANTHROPOLOGY AND SOCIOLOGY

Readings in Anthropology. Edited by Morton H. Fried. (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1959), Vol I: *Physical Anthropology, Linguistics, Archeology*, xi + 482 pp.; Vol II: *Readings in Cultural Anthropology*, ix + 598 pp.

Volume I of these readings contains thirty-five articles devoted to three of the main components of modern anthropology and Volume II contains thirty-eight articles concerned with aspects of the fourth. The emphasis is not on the historical development of the science, but on anthropology as it exists today. (Only five articles are by scholars born before 1880: Tyler, Wissler, Morgan, Densmore, and Kroeber.) For the most part the authors are top figures in the field of anthropology, though one does miss a few who should be here. It is difficult to understand why, for example, Hallowell should not be allowed to speak on culture and personality, and Voegelin on language.

Each article is preceded by a paragraph of introduction by the editor in which he places the article in its context with a word toward evaluation. Important works by each author are listed in an appended note. The articles are chosen with such care that the whole becomes a complete general coverage of the subject of modern anthropology. It would serve admirably as collateral reading in folklore courses. Especially important to folklore are Robert Redfield's essay, "The Folk Society," Morton Levine's "Prehistoric Art and Ideology," Frances Densmore's "Music of the American Indian," and Conrad Arensberg's "American Communities." It is good to have Edward Tyler's "The Science of Culture" so handily reprinted.

At the end of each volume is a "Glossary of Anthropological Terms;" they are rather more specifically defined than they are in the dictionaries. Also included are tables of correlation of this book with representative texts of anthropology. The lack of indexes is inexcusable.

Of course, the primary value of these readings is as corollary to text book or lecture courses in anthropology and folklore, and they will admirably serve that need. They will be valuable also as a refresher course in anthropology. Anthropology as a science has taken new turns and made distance since Boas. This book will bring the non-professional reader up-to-date by making available for him key articles that express modern anthropology.

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Water Witching U.S.A. By Evon Z. Vogt and Ray Hyman. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1959). ix + 248 pp. \$4.95.

Water Witching U.S.A. is an attempt on the part of authors Vogt and Hyman to treat the subject of the still very-much-in-evidence

use of the "divining rod" in rural America in as objective and "scientific" a way as possible. They wanted to know what kind of people American diviners are who in this enlightened and scientific age would resort to such a practice and what their justifications to themselves and others for their activities might be.

The chapter titles practically speak for themselves. Chapter one is titled, "Why Water Witching?" in which the authors pose the six basic questions around which their book is organized. The most important of which is "Why does water witching continue to be practiced in the United States?" The answers to the other five questions become the chapters titled: "The Family Tree" dealing with the history of water witching as we know it today as it came to us from sixteenth-century Europe; "Does it work? Case Histories and Field Tests" in which the authors conclude that "the human being is a poor assessor of the operation of chance. . . that without experimental controls the 'facts' can be made to tell more than one story" (page 61); "Does it work? Controlled Experiments," wherein is presented the "objective" evidence against the efficacy of water witching and the prowess of the diviner; "From Talking Horses to Talking Twigs" a chapter that is interestingly written as it unfolds the authors' belief that behind the phenomenon of "talking twigs" etc. lies what the psychologist calls "ideomotor action" (page 119); "Why Does the Rod Move" provides us with the details and explanations of neuromuscular behavior and ideomotor action; "Who's Who in Witching" introduces us to the type of people or groups in which this practice is most frequently found; and lastly "Water Witching as Magical Divination" wherein Vogt and Hyman conclude "that water witching is a clear-cut case of *magical divination* in our culture which persists because there are potent psychological and social reasons for it" (page 192). Grillet de Givry *Witchcraft, Magic and Alchemy*, (Translated by J. Courtenay Locke: Frederick Publications, 1954) in his chapter on rhabdomancy (page 320), summarizes the practice in these words "Sorcerers are numerous nowadays, and they, rather than engineers holding diplomas, are applied to when country folk want to dig a well with certainty and at the least possible cost." I am not sure that Vogt and Hyman had their hands on de Givry's work, but it is interesting to note that the conclusions are the same though the language is different.

In "Appendix I" the authors provide us with "Letter of Explanation and Dowsing Questionnaire Mailed to County Agricultural Extension Agents" from which their data were compiled. "Appendix

II" is contributed by H. E. Thomas of the United States Geological Survey on the topic "Water-Well Location by Scientific Divination" in which we learn that nothing will work perfectly. No device is fool-proof, but scientific operations give us the least chance of error.

The Bibliography (pages 241-248) is impressive and rather adequate both as to articles and books on the subject.

The book is a fine addition to scholarly works in the field of folklore.

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REGIONAL AND LOCAL LORE

Up Cutshin and Down Greasy. Folklore of a Kentucky Mountain Family. By Leonard W. Roberts. (Lexington, Ky.: University of Kentucky Press 1959) vii + 165 pp. \$5.00.

This book is a study in depth of a family, the Couch family, of eastern Kentucky, on the headwaters of the Kentucky River and of their folkways. The study is especially rich and revealing because Roberts, although apparently working as rapidly as circumstances would permit, spent three years, off and on, with this family and consequently managed to pull out much material, many minor points, which the hasty collector would inevitably have missed.

Having gathered his materials over a long period of time, Roberts sifted them into logical and chronological order, then allowed the people to speak for themselves, he remaining as much in the background as possible. He begins logically with the family stories, allowing each of the two major personages in the family, Dave and Jim, to tell their versions, then the minor personages theirs, and not making any effort to reconcile differing and sometimes contradictory statements.

He devotes twenty informative pages to moonshining—the art, the hazards, the joys and the financial necessity.

In an especially rich chapter, "Dave and Jim, Their Folkways," Roberts weaves in superstitions, beliefs and events that are the blood of life. He gives charms that never fail and bloodstoppers that saved many lives. Particularly noteworthy is the given initiation into witchhood:

Said he set a silver plate he had down on the ground behind. He cursed the Lord and blessed the Devil and then shot at the sunball. Said he farred three shots, and every time he would shoot, a drop of clear blood would fall

in that silver plate behind him. . . . 'Now put your hand on top of your head and the other'n at the bottom of your feet. Now swear that you'll give all between those hands to the Devil to do with you just as he pleases!

Roberts collected in all from the Couches sixty-one stories and one hundred songs. Of these he gives in his last chapter seventeen of the former and six of the latter. Both types represent well the mountaineer's repertory and his style of delivery. The stories range from the rather common Type 480, which the informant called "The Two Gals," to the very rare *Märchen*, Type 303, "The Magic White Deer" and the story of Polyphemus, which Roberts feels must have come from *The Arabian Nights*.

There are Old World ballads like "The Devil and the School Child," (Child 3) which is here reported for the first time from Kentucky, new coal mine and murder ballads, and a jig.

The only regrettable aspect of this book is that so few stories and songs could be included. In the Appendix, however, are listed all these items, and they are available from the University of Kentucky Press on Microcards, series A, no. 30.

Otherwise Robert's work is thoroughly admirable, a model for folklorists. He had the perseverance needed to stay with a potential informant until he had given his information, the dogged determination to trace materials back to their sources, and the good common sense to allow the informants to speak for themselves. We need more folklorists like Roberts.

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Ray B. Browne

Nebraska Folklore. By Louise Pound. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1959.) x + 243 pp. \$4.50.

Nebraska Folklore is not, as the title might suggest, a compendium, or even selected specimens, of the folk beliefs, tales, songs, and so on of that state. Instead, as the foreword states, it is "a selection of Miss Pound's studies in Nebraska folklore"—articles from folklore and historical journals, most of which were originally read as papers before various folklore conferences and four of which were included in *Selected Writings of Louise Pound* (1949). Consequently many important types of Nebraska folklore, such as songs, riddles, sayings, and even folktales, are omitted—except for articles *about* folk songs, such as "The Southwestern Cowboy Songs and English and Scottish Popular Ballads," an early and important critique of the "Harvard

position" in regard to ballad origins, and *about* various types of Nebraska folktales.

The articles specifically on Nebraska folklore are devoted to lore concerning caves, snakes, rain and rainmaking; legends about lakes which originated in tears and about lovers' leaps, and the examination of legends about such characters as the politician, journalist and hoaxer John G. Maher and the "strong men" Antoine Barada, Moses Stocking, Febold Feboldson, and Olof Bergstrom—which last character is suggested as the "original" of the more widely known Feboldson.

If one Nebraska folklore article deserves special mention it is "Some Old Nebraska Folk Customs," which includes sections on Fourth of July celebrations, political rallies and oratory, birthday, wedding, and funeral customs, "pound parties," "bees" of various types, outdoor and indoor games (rather slight), literary and debating societies, spelling contests, and singing schools, dances and play parties, water witching, food, the autograph album, and so on. Both the social historian and the historical novelist would find here a wealth of information and suggestions, while any midwesterner will find himself almost constantly comparing these customs with similar ones characteristic of his own community. The reviewer, for example, who is currently editing reminiscences of life in Iowa and Kansas, 1873-1945, noted in them a mention of a bridal couple's visit (1902) to the home of the bridegroom's parents the day after the wedding, but only after perusing Miss Pound's volume (p. 194) did he realize that this was not merely an individual occurrence but a folk custom, the "infare."

The volume also includes a so-called "Appendix" of three articles of a more general nature on folklore, folksong, and dialect. The reader not primarily interested in Nebraska folklore might well begin with these articles.

The University of Nebraska Press is to be commended on making these articles more readily available. (It is to be hoped that the misplacement, in binding, of pp. 221-236 was confined to the reviewer's copy!) The folklore world would be placed even more deeply in debt by the publication of a new and enlarged edition of the late Miss Pound's *American Ballads and Songs* (New York, 1922) which would include additional material from her notes, mentioned in her Syllabus, *Folk Song of Nebraska and the Central West* (Lincoln, 1915), but hitherto unpublished.

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Kenneth Porter

Things That Go Bump in the Night. By Louis C. Jones. (New York: Hill and Wang, 1959). Pp. xii + 208, list of sources and index.

This is a book of ghost stories and lore that is popular in its approach and aimed at the general trade market. As such, it is extremely congenial reading. It is entertaining throughout, and should certainly capture a large segment of the public that fancies ghost lore.

Dr. Jones was presented with, and has overcome, a number of problems in writing this book. Not the least of these difficulties was the fact that the bulk of this material was collected by his students when he was teaching at New York State College for Teachers, in Albany, and thus given to him in many different forms and varieties of narratives. To harmonize such a variety of voices would have been quite a job. To solve this problem, Dr. Jones has chosen to retell all the stories in his own voice.

From the 1,000 or so stories of the supernatural that were given him by his students, the author has selected somewhere around 200. He has not told each of the tales as a separate entity, but has rather strung them together as a part of the ghost lore of New York State. His organization is by groups of stories. The first two chapters are concerned with introducing the reader to the variety of ghosts to be found in the York State. The first chapter explains (with illustrations) how and why ghost legends arise. The second explores the reasons why the dead return.

Subsequent chapters are devoted to the different types of ghost stories which the author encountered. Thus, chapters are devoted to stories of haunted houses, of violence and sudden death, and to tales of historical personages who return to earth in ghostly form. The last chapter is devoted solely to that most popular of American ghost tales, "The Ghostly Hitchhiker," and all its forms as encountered by Dr. Jones's students.

Though the author was not able to perform the folklorist's function of giving us stories as they were given to him, he has done the second best thing and not changed the substance of the stories; he has also given a thorough list of his students and their informants.

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Roger D. Abrahams

The Rainbow Sign. By Alan Lomax. (New York: Duell, Sloan, and Pearce, 1959.) 209 pp. \$4.00.

The Rainbow Sign is made up of four parts: "Deep River," a statement by Alan Lomax concerning the Negro and the South and the use the Negro has made of religion to alleviate his hard lot; "Nora—Gifted to Sing," an autobiographical sketch of a church singer; "Reverend Renfrew—Called to Preach," a second autobiographical sketch of a Baptist minister; and "The Meeting—'There is a Hell,'" the text of a typical revivalist sermon recorded by Lomax in 1942 in northern Mississippi. It is a much more interesting book to read than to think about.

The more I learn of Lomax the more I am convinced he is not a scholar or even a folklorist at all, but rather an extremely gifted creative writer, who uses folklore as a source of inspiration and who transforms the material he gathers from his informants and his readings into top-rate lyric pieces. He does in prose what Harry Belafonte and the Weavers do in the recording studio—and the result is truly enjoyable, but scarcely more than entertainment.

The opening essay "Deep River" is particularly frustrating for the scholar. The main points that the author develops in it are that the Negro has been maltreated, that Christianity has enabled him to keep going, and that just around the corner there is a rainbow in the sky. Most of us are pretty well aware of such matters. Mentioned, but totally undeveloped, lie some truly challenging points concerning the Negro and Negro-White problems: the fact that "the two peoples are strongly attracted to one another" (p. 5); that the "Negro society provides a great number of socially acceptable patterns by means of which its members can collectively . . . express their sexual and aggressive drives with a minimum of guilt feeling" (p. 10); that such outlets "for easing tension enable the Negro folk community to combine in a singing and dancing orchestra, to improvise poly-rhythmically and polyphonically" (p. 10); that the "relish for revenge is remarkable for its absence among the Negroes" (p. 8). But Lomax doesn't seem to recognize the fertility of his own thoughts. He skips over these ideas, each one worth a Ph.D. thesis, and bends his energy to the emotional impact of such half-truths as "the blues is just revenge" (p. 7) or "the Negroes were the first group to experience the feelings of rejection, isolation, degradation, and fear that have now become familiar to us all" (p. 7).

The two autobiographies contain a good bit of folk belief and folksay, as well as fragments of songs and hymns. Reverend Renfrew

even recounts original texts of Aarne-Thompson Mt. 330 and Mt. 311. But the bulk of both autobiographies deals with suffering and the comforts of the church. As accounts of lives lived in America in the last century, they are fascinating. No one can read them without being touched by the vitality, the courage, the humanity of the unfortunate Nora and the self-satisfied Reverend. However, one is not going to be particularly enlightened by such reading, unless he has never been exposed to the mass of similar matter that has been produced in recent years. Even a commercial job such as Louis Armstrong's *Satchmo*, Signet S1245 (New American Library, New York, 1955) covers pretty much the same pattern, as does Lomax's far more complete, scholarly, and powerful *Mr. Jelly Roll* (Grove Press, New York, 1950). The same is also true of the sermon. Presented by Lomax as a masterpiece of poetry, which of course it is not, printed as though it were blank verse, it is captivating to read. But it doesn't take much reflection to realize one can turn the radio on any Sunday in any city with a large Negro population and pick up something not too different beamed from a local church.

James Russell Lowell once wrote about Henry David Thoreau,

. . . he was not by nature an observer. He saw only the things he looked for. . . . Neither his attention nor his genius was of the spontaneous kind. He discovered nothing. He thought everything a discovery of his own, from moonlight to the planting of acorns and nuts by squirrels. This is a defect in his character, but one of his chief charms as a writer. Everything grows fresh under his hand.

I think readers of *The Rainbow Sign* will find it one of the freshest, yet least original, books to have come off a folklore press in recent years. Anyone will enjoy reading it, but only the uninitiated will find it particularly enlightening or useful.

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Tristram P. Coffin

FROM THE ARCHIVES

CURES BY "POWWOWING" FROM MY GRANDMOTHER'S NOTEBOOK

Submitted by MRS. JENNIE CATHARINE HUNTZINGER
PENDLETON, INDIANA

The following notes on healing by means of "powwowing" come from the notebook of Catharine Ann Brenneman-Mitschelen (1865-1945) who was of Swiss-German descent and was raised near Wakarusa, Indiana. They were submitted to *Midwest Folklore* by her granddaughter, Mrs. Huntzinger.

The writer feels much impressed to tell of her experiences, of what I had in my younger days. I was raised among church members that practiced Powwowing. Some called it praying, some curing, and some doctors called it divine healing. And there are still other names.

When I was 3 yrs. old, I had Erysipulus in my face. Mother took me out to where there was a bake oven where there were live coals of fire on the ground and had a shovel & took coals on the shovel and tossed them over my head, and said some words in secret. And I was healed.

Sometime later mother died. When I was about 10 yrs. I had another siege of Erysipulus. Then a neighbor man was called in and he made me look towards the sun as it was rising in the morning and again at noon and at the sun when it was going down, and also said some words in secret. And I was healed.

And when I was twelve, I had another siege, and was taken to another neighbor man. He was a very filthy & slovenly looking man with tobacco juice. And he put his finger in his mouth and made a ring around the Erysipulus and put his dirty finger through my mouth. And blowed his stinky breath in my face. I was mad. I was to go back the next morning, for they always wanted to cure 3 times. He also mumbled some words, but I did not go back. But I was healed.

Later years I got married. When our oldest boy was born, in a few days he had some breaking out. Some said it was prickly heat, others said baby rash. The Dr. said it was "exema" and said give him saphron tea and he gave a salve to rub on him. In 3 days I couldn't see the pimples. The salve was too strong and drove it back in the blood. He cried and cried till he was blue. Then a neighbor said to take him to a certain woman. We went. The first thing she asked me, "What is his name?" I said he had no name. He was 4 wks. old. She said you must give him a real name and you

dare not change it. We called him Monroe Oliver. Then she took him in her arms and went cattern across the room from one corner to the other, then the other way, and kept shaking him and also had words. Soon she gave him back & said I have cured for many children, but I can do nothing for him. Another doctor then gave some blood medicine & the exema broke out & he was soon well.

Then my niece had Erysipulus at her right foot. He [i.e., the doctor] put on medicine that burned her foot so bad that the whole foot seemed to be like proud flesh and it smelled rotten. She could not walk for more than 6 weeks.

Husband said if he had anything like that he would have some-one powwow over it. So when our boy was 4 yrs. old & had Erysipulus on his right foot, I reminded him of what he said. He took him to my half-sister's uncle. The boy said, "The man blowed on my foot, and he made it feel good."

Later an elderly neighbor man was called for my husband's mother who had bone Erysipulus and he said he would like to teach it to me (As a man must teach a woman & vice versa.) At first I did not want to, but finally I took that work. He told me the words and from that time on for four or five years, I would cure for different things. Always using the same words.

Then we decided that it was not from God. Husband said, the wickedest person on earth could take those same words that I use and it would be a cure. After prayer, it seemed God spoke in a clear voice sayings "In this way you're trying to get ahead of God. You ought to pray & ask the Lord to heal." That was clear to me, and I never said the words over any more. And no tongue can ever tell how thankful I am that the Dear Lord gave me the light on it.

Mrs. Brenneman-Mitschelen never revealed the words she had learned for powwowing, but her granddaughter recalls that she did tell once about some words used in another form of powwowing. Mrs. Huntzinger writes, "Someone stole a team and wagon, and the owner went to a man. He went to a stream; and very carefully selected a perfectly clean stone. Then he said, 'May I be as free from God as this pebble is from sand.' He said that if the stolen property had not been taken across water, it would be returned. It was."